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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fifth year

Identical letters dated 8 October 2010 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

We write today to state our strong condemnation of the concerted actions Israel, the occupying Power, is taking to escalate tensions on the ground through a systematic campaign of murder, land grab and aggression, as well as the heinous crimes committed by illegal Israeli settlers against the Palestinian civilian population and their properties, including holy places. The actions by both Israel, the occupying Power, and its illegal settlers, who are funded, protected and encouraged by the occupying Power, threaten to incite further anger and violence and endanger the prospects for peace talks to resume in order to reach a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

Today, in its most recent crime against the Palestinian people, Israeli occupying forces carried out a highly aggressive and bloody raid against an entire neighbourhood in the West Bank city of Al-Khalil (Hebron). In this regard, Israeli occupying forces laid siege to the neighbourhood of Jabal Johar and bombarded a home there while firing indiscriminately in the residential neighbourhood. The assault left two Palestinians dead and several others injured. Israeli occupying forces also detained six residents while bulldozers demolished and destroyed several homes, shops and livestock dens in the neighbourhood. Overall, this assault caused bloodshed, chaos and widespread damage, and stoked anger and fear among the civilian population, including children and women.

The Israeli Prime Minister and his Defense Minister praised the occupying forces for this deadly assault, calling it a "measure of justice". Not only do we find these statements abhorrently racist but they are also highly inflammatory. Instead of doing its utmost to maintain calm and harbour trust, Israel, the occupying Power, is ordering the assassination of Palestinians and the destruction of their property. These illegal acts are criminal and any attempt to justify them serves only to highlight the occupying Power's determination to walk the path of violence and prejudice rather than the one of peace and cooperation to which Palestinians, along with the international community, are committed.

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We maintain that this unwarranted escalation is twofold; a combination of official military action and terrorist acts by violent settlers, who have always acted with impunity. In addition to the burning of the mosque and the Holy Koran in the town of Beit Fajjar in the occupied West Bank by Israeli settlers on Monday, 4 October 2010, the world watched in horror today as media footage showed an Israeli settler car charging forward and hitting two young Palestinian boys. The driver, David Be'ri, is a known right-wing Israeli settler leader who heads a group that works to rid occupied East Jerusalem of its Palestinian residents in order to illegally place extremist settlers there instead. In addition to this criminal incident, Palestinian medical sources in Hebron confirmed that two civilians were also injured this afternoon as a result of gunfire by an illegal settler. Unfortunately, Israeli settlers carry out crimes against Palestinian civilians on a regular basis with impunity, as they have constantly been protected and sheltered from legal accountability by Israel, the occupying Power.

Israel, the occupying Power, has also unleashed its military escalation on the besieged Gaza Strip. Over the past 48 hours, Israeli occupying forces have conducted two air strikes and repeatedly fired on workers and farmers in Gaza, injuring several civilians. This latest incident of Israeli aggression only causes further suffering in an already devastated society, living a humanitarian disaster because of the punitive, inhumane siege Israel, the occupying Power, has been imposing on the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza since 2007.

These events are neither isolated nor a product of chance. Instead, they are the conscious choice the occupying Power has made to respond to the overwhelming will of the international community, which is working tirelessly to save a credible chance for peace from the jeopardy its illegal actions have caused. They demonstrate the same impunity as Israel's refusal to end settlement activity in the West Bank, which time and time again has destroyed the credibility of efforts to launch peace talks. Hence, we call on the international community, embodied in the United Nations and your good office, to act swiftly and decisively to put an end to this campaign of terror. We further warn that such bloodshed and unchecked terrorism by settler militias poses a grave and real danger to stability in the region and undermines the credibility of the peace efforts that are under way by the international community.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 375 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 1 October 2010 (A/ES-10/502-S/2010/505) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations